**Journal # 1 (pages 1-50)**

**Summary:**

Omar Kahayyam, the illegitimate son of one of three sisters and an Angrez, grows up inside the walls of an old mansion without outside contact until the age of 12. With a distorted upbringing (he resents his 3 mother’s indulgence and neglect), Omar enters the outside world when he registers for school and is exposed to insults, judgments, and discrimination for being fatherless. A sexually curious adolescent, he is the middle of a love triangle between Eduardo and Farah. He is also an outsider in school but his ability to learn captures the attention of Eduardo Rodriguez who persuades him to pursue a medical career.

**Vocabulary words:**

Cohorts: a group or company: *She has a cohort of admirers*

Philistinism: lacking in or hostile to culture.

Inchoate: not yet completed or fully developed; rudimentary.

Icily: in an icy manner: *I received him icily because of the harsh way he had treated me.*

Misogynist: one who hates women.

Gatta: wide set of steps descending to a river, esp. a river used for bathing.

Pariah: an outcast.

Canoodling: To engage in caressing, petting, or lovemaking.

Voyeur: A person who derives sexual gratification from observing the naked bodies or sexual acts of others, especially from a secret vantage point.

**Questions**:

1. What is the relevance of the execution of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (p. 20)?
2. What is the relevance of the author’s making a point about shame being “not exclusive property of the East?

Quote #1:

“Wherever I turn, there is something of which to be ashamed. But shame is like everything else; live with it for long enough and it becomes part of the furniture…nobody notices anymore. And everyone is civilized” (p. 21).

It is my opinion that the author is calling into question the reader’s taken-for-granted assumptions about the surroundings in the book. Perhaps he is suggesting that one becomes desensitized to an ill-defined environment as long as it becomes part of the landscape one inhabits. He also suggests, that the process of “desensitization,” is disguised as becoming “civilized” when one learns to stop questioning the premises upon which he operates. Being that the title of the book is Shame, I suspect this paragraph is foreshadowing which direction the author will lead the reader, and perhaps guides the reader’s thinking to seek for incongruences and dissonances of the events that the author will present in the book.

Quote #2:

“Gossip is like water. It probes surfaces for their weak places, until it finds the breakthrough point; so it was only a matter of time before the good people of Q. hit upon the most shameful, scandalous explanation of all. Oh God, a grown man in love with a little child” (p. 44).

The author uses this quote to show the reader how people are willing to concoct anything in the name of gossip. The “good people” of Q. are critical and judgmental willing to relinquish reason to yield to the perverse imaginations of their minds. Willing to blame the victim (Farah) or inculpate the innocent (Eduardo), even in lack of evidence, one can help but question the nature of the “good people” of Q. Furthermore, the author cleverly questions the integrity of the people of Q., only to add credibility to their assertions later, forcing the reader to formulate his own conclusions and seek for his own answers.